

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes May 19, 2015

Members present: Linda Hanson, Ray Guenter, Robert Kennedy, Connie Melo, Ellen Phillips, Donna Sterling and Phillip Walker
Council Liaison: Shari Cantor
Members Absent: Ruth Kurien
Staff present: Kathleen Faroni
Guests: Noreen Batchelder, Armena Walsh
Volunteer Secretary: Amy Lynn Silverman

Chairman Phillip Walker called the meeting to order at 10:31AM.

The Minutes of April 21, 2015 were approved unanimously.

Chairman Walker thanked Ray Guenter for chairing the April meeting. He noted that while parking may have been a problem today, it is very complicated to try to move the meeting. Jim Doran has been asked to present a Senior Job Bank update at the June meeting. In Jim's expected absence, either Bill Stachelek or Bob Cave will present. Senator Beth Bye has asked everyone to come tomorrow to the West Hartford Senior Center for Senior Day. Phil will contact Essie Labrot about the approval of Noreen Batchelder's application to become a member of the Commission. He handed out the description of the Commission for review by the members. This will be on the June agenda.

Ellen Phillips introduced Margaret Murphy, the Associate Director of the Center for Medicare Advocacy. Attorney Murphy participates in the Probate Court in representing incapacitated adults. She is a West Hartford native. Ms. Murphy spoke about the Center, a non-profit founded in 1986 by Judith Stein to provide free help to individuals with Medicare questions. There are 14 attorneys in Connecticut and others in Washington who work on policy changes.

Ms. Murphy provided a print out that discusses Medicare Trends (attached.) Staff at the Center trains the Choices volunteers who help individuals with their healthcare choices. The Center does file Class Action Law Suits when Medicare is getting something wrong, for example, the "Improvement Standard." She spoke about the issues surrounding chronic conditions, and observation status. Now Recovery contractors audit the hospitals which receive incentives for denying care under Part A. Suits that the Center brings do not seek money but rather coverage. The Center can represent Connecticut citizens free of charge but that is more limited across the country. Funding for the Center comes from grants and contracts with the state. The budget is about \$4 million, of which 75% is state funding.

Senior Job Bank

Jim Doran submitted a written report. The SJB second anniversary is being celebrated on May 27. It will be represented at a booth on West Hartford Day in June. A brokerage account has been opened and finances are in good shape. Efforts continue in the "Need Help" area with the spring arrival. Caryn Ferris, who was involved with the former SJB organization, is the new fund raising consultant.

Town Council

Shari Cantor reported about the ground breaking for the Charter Oak School which is the oldest in town. The building will be "round space" which is the new education model. 80% of the cost is expected to be reimbursed from the state. There is much housing building activity around town.

and more is anticipated around the new bus way. The Complete Streets proposal has been submitted; however, bicycle questions and other user groups' issues need to be addressed before the proposal is passed. The Senior Playscape proposal needs an advocacy group to determine if there is a critical mass of people wanting this.

Senior Centers

No verbal reports. Written reports accompany these Minutes.

New Business

Ellen Phillips asked that parking issues here at the Elmwood Senior Center be addressed at a future meeting.

Armena Walsh reminded the group that Celebrate West Hartford is June 6 and 7. There will be a booth for West Hartford Services for Seniors.

Kathleen Faroni announced that Robin Collins is retiring June 3rd as the Director of the Elmwood Community Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55PM.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, June 16 at 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Lynn Silverman
Volunteer Secretary